

What is claimed is:

SU4
A17
1. An apparatus for retrieving information from a site on a network, said apparatus comprising:

a storage device having prestored therein various information about predetermined one or more sites and search information for calling up the sites;

a display device;

an operator unit; and

a processor device coupled with said storage device, said display device and said operator unit, said processor device being adapted to:

read out the information stored in said storage device;

cause the read-out information to be displayed on said display device;

transmit, when a predetermined item of information is selected from among the information displayed on said display device in response to an operation of said operator unit, the search information corresponding to the selected item of information to the network; and

receive information supplied from a particular one of the sites, via the network, in response to the transmitted search information.

2. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said processor device is further adapted to cause the information received from the particular site to be

displayed on said display device.

3. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said storage device has stored therein display program information for providing a visual display content identical or similar to a Web page for each of the sites and address information for calling up the Web page of each of the sites, and

wherein said processor device first causes a visual display content identical or similar to the Web page for one of the sites selected in response to an operation of said operation unit to be displayed on said display device, without accessing the network, on the basis of readout of the display program information stored in said storage device, and then, when a predetermined item of information is selected from among the information displayed on said display device in response to an operation of said operator unit, transmits, as the search information, the address information of the Web page corresponding to the selected predetermined item of information to the network, to thereby establish a connection with one of the sites on the network which corresponds to the transmitted address information.

4. A method for retrieving information from a site on a network, said method comprising:

a step of distributing in advance, to a client, a storage medium having prestored therein various information

about predetermined one or more sites and search information for calling up the sites;

a step of reading out stored information from said storage medium distributed to the client and causing the read-out stored information to be displayed on a display device;

a step of causing a user to select an item of information from among the information displayed on said display device;

a step of, when a predetermined item of information is selected, transmitting the search information corresponding to the selected item of information to the network; and

a step of receiving information supplied from a particular one of the sites via the network in response to the transmitted search information.

5. A method as claimed in claim 4 which further comprising a step of causing the information received from the particular site to be displayed on said display device.

6. A computer program comprising a group of instructions for causing a computer to perform a method for retrieving information from a site on a network, said method comprising the steps of:

reading out stored information from a storage medium having prestored therein various information about

predetermined one or more sites and search information for calling up the sites and causing the read-out stored information to be displayed on a display device, without accessing the network;

causing a user to select an item of information from among the information displayed on said display device;

transmitting, when a predetermined item of information is selected, the search information corresponding to the selected item of information to the network; and

receiving information supplied from a particular one of the sites via the network in response to the transmitted search information.

7. A computer program as claimed in claim 6 wherein said method further comprising a step of causing the information received from the particular site to be displayed on said display device.

8. A computer program as claimed in claim 6 wherein said storage medium has stored therein display program information for providing a visual display content identical or similar to a Web page for each of the sites and address information for calling up the Web page of each of the sites, and

wherein said step of reading out causes the visual display content identical or similar to the Web page for a selected one of the sites to be displayed on said display device, without accessing the network, on the basis

of readout of the display program information stored in said storage medium, and

wherein when the predetermined item of information is selected by said step of causing, said step of transmitting transmits, as the search information, the address information of the Web page corresponding to the selected predetermined item of information to the network, to thereby establish a connection with one of the sites on the network which corresponds to the address information.

9. A machine-readable storage medium containing a group of instructions to cause said machine to perform a method for retrieving information from a site on a network, said method comprising the steps of:

reading out stored information from a memory having prestored therein various information about predetermined one or more sites and search information for calling up the sites and causing the read-out stored information to be displayed on a display device, without accessing the network;

causing a user to select an item of information from among the information displayed on said display device;

transmitting, when a predetermined item of information is selected, the search information corresponding to the selected item of information to the network; and

receiving information supplied from a particular one of the sites via the network in response to the transmitted search information.

10. A machine-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 9 wherein said method further comprising a step of causing the information received from the particular site to be displayed on said display device.

11. A machine-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 9 wherein said memory has stored therein display program information for providing a visual display content identical or similar to a Web page for each of the sites and address information for calling up the Web page of each of the sites, and

wherein said step of reading out causes the visual display content identical or similar to the Web page for a selected one of the sites to be displayed on said display device, without accessing the network, on the basis of readout of the display program information stored in said storage medium, and

wherein when the predetermined item of information is selected by said step of causing, said step of transmitting transmits, as the search information, the address information of the Web page corresponding to the selected predetermined item of information to the network, to thereby establish a connection with one of the sites on the network which corresponds to the address information.

Sub 12. A machine-readable storage medium containing program information for displaying a pseudo Web page and a group of data accompanying said program information, said program

information and said group of data being read out from said storage medium when a method for displaying the pseudo Web page is performed by the machine,

wherein said program information comprises information for providing pseudo Web pages identical or similar to Web pages for one or more predetermined sites on a network, and

said group of data includes search information for calling up real Web pages from the predetermined sites.

13. A machine-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 12 wherein said method for displaying the pseudo Web page includes:

a step of displaying a pseudo Web page on the basis of said program information without accessing the network; and

a step of, while the pseudo Web page is being displayed in accordance with a predetermined instruction, obtaining a real Web page from one of the predetermined sites on the network by use of the search information accompanying said program information.

14. A machine-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 12 wherein said program information includes a program for selling products that can be sold at the predetermined sites.

15. A machine-readable storage medium as claimed in

claim 12 wherein said program information includes a program showing a procedure necessary for obtaining information that is obtainable from the predetermined sites.

16. A method for selling or distributing a product or information via a network, said method comprising:

a step of distributing in advance, to a client, a pseudo display program identical or similar to at least a portion of a display program at a Web site for selling or distributing a product or information;

a step of falsely opening the Web site by means of a computer of the client using the pseudo display program distributed by said step of distributing, without intervention of the network; and

a step of actually connecting to the Web site via the network at a predetermined stage in the course of execution of the pseudo display program and then going forward with a procedure for selling or distributing the product or information in accordance with a visual presentation based on the display program supplied by the Web site.

17. A method as claimed in claim 16 which further comprises a step of allowing a portion of the product or information to be sold or distributed in the course of the procedure for selling or distributing the product or information, and wherein only a portion of the product or information can be sold or distributed by the Web site.

18. A method as claimed in claim 17 wherein said product or information is musical composition data, and a portion of a musical composition data file of a music piece can be sold or distributed by the Web site.

19. A computer program comprising a group of instructions for causing a computer to perform a method for selling or distributing a product or information via a network, said method comprising:

a step of distributing in advance, to a client, a pseudo display program identical or similar to at least a portion of a display program at a Web site for selling or distributing a product or information;

a step of falsely displaying the Web site by means of a computer of the client executing the pseudo display program distributed by said step of distributing, without intervention of the network; and

a step of actually connecting to the Web site via the network at a predetermined stage in the course of execution of the pseudo display program and then going forward with a procedure for selling or distributing the product or information in accordance with a visual presentation based on the display program supplied by said Web site.

20. A computer program as claimed in claim 19 which further comprises a step of allowing a portion of the product or information to be sold or distributed in the course of the procedure for selling or distributing the

product or information, and wherein only a portion of the product or information can be sold or distributed by the Web site.

21. A computer program as claimed in claim 20 wherein said product or information is musical composition data, and a portion of a musical composition data file of a music piece can be sold or distributed by the Web site.

22. An information retrieval system for searching for information and delivering the searched-for information via a network, said information retrieval system comprising:

a server apparatus comprising:

a storage device storing therein information to be supplied in response to search information; and

a processor device coupled with said storage device and adapted to:

receive search information supplied via the network;

read out, from said storage device, information corresponding to the received search information; and

output the read-out information to the network; and

a client apparatus comprising:

a memory storing therein information to be displayed in response to search information;

a display device;

an operator unit; and

a processor device coupled with said memory, said display device and said operator unit, said processor device being adapted to:

read out the information stored in said memory;
cause the read-out information to be displayed on said display device;

transmit, when a predetermined item of information is selected from among the information displayed on said display device in response to an operation of said operator unit, the search information corresponding to the selected item of information to the network; and

receive information read out from said storage device of said server apparatus, via the network, in response to the transmitted search information.

23. An information retrieval system as claimed in claim 22 wherein the information to be supplied stored in said storage device of said server apparatus includes at least display program information for providing a Web page, and wherein the information to be displayed stored in said memory of said client apparatus includes display program information of a pseudo Web page for providing a visual display content identical or similar to the Web page.

Sub
A1 24. An information retrieval system as claimed in claim 22 wherein said storage device of said server apparatus stores therein one or more items of the information to be

supplied, and

wherein said processor device of said client apparatus is further adapted to:

select a portion of one item of information to be supplied, in response to an operation of said operator unit; and

obtain the selected portion of one item of information to be supplied, from said server apparatus via the network.

25. An information retrieval system as claimed in claim 24 wherein the one item of information to be supplied is a musical composition data file of a music piece, and a portion of the musical composition data file can be selected and received from said server apparatus.

26. A computer-readable storage medium containing a file to be used by a computer of a client so that the client can receive a desired item from a server via a network, said file including:

a plurality of items of specifying information each specifying one of a limited plurality of items that are among all items capable of being supplied by said server; and

a plurality of items of display information each indicative of a display object that shows one of the limited plurality of items,

wherein each of the items of specifying information

and display information is described in a link-enabling format, and each of the items of specifying information and/or a visual presentation of the display object are linked with an address in said server.

27. A computer-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 26 wherein each of the items capable of being supplied by said server is a product or information, and said file is used when the client desires to cause the computer to perform a procedure for ordering a desired product or information from said server.

28. A computer-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 26 wherein each of the display objects has a peculiar display mode corresponding to a characteristic of the corresponding item.

29. A computer-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 26 wherein further information indicative of a display object for a network search is described in said file in a link-enabling format, and a visual presentation of the display object for the network search is linked with a Web address for effecting the network search.

30. A computer-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 26 wherein further information indicative of a display object for a version upgrade is described in said file in a link-enabling format, and a visual presentation

of the display object for the version upgrade is linked with a Web address for downloading updated contents of said file.

31. A method for a user to access a server on a network to order a product from the server, said method comprising:

a first step of reading out a predetermined file by means of a computer of the user without accessing the network, said predetermined file including a plurality of items of specifying information each specifying one of a limited plurality of products that are among all products capable of being ordered from said server and a plurality of items of display information each indicative of a display object that shows one of the limited plurality of products, each of the items of specifying information and display information being described in a link-enabling format, each of the items of specifying information and/or a visual presentation of the display object being linked with an address of a screen for ordering a corresponding product from said server;

a second step of causing items of the specifying information and/or the display objects to be displayed on a display device, on the basis of the predetermined file read out by said first step;

a third step of allowing a selection of the items of specifying information and/or the display objects displayed on said display device; and

a fourth step of requesting said server to supply a screen of the address linked with the item of specifying information and/or the display object selected by said third step, obtaining the screen, and then causing said display device to display, on the basis of the screen, a screen for ordering a product corresponding to the selected item of specifying information and/or the display object from said server,

wherein after said fourth step, a procedure for ordering the product is carried out by accessing said server via the network.

32. A machine-readable storage medium containing a group of instructions to cause said machine to perform a method for a user to access a server on a network to order a product from the server, said method comprising:

a first step of reading out a predetermined file by means of a computer of the user without accessing the network, said predetermined file including a plurality of items of specifying information each specifying one of a limited plurality of products that are among all products capable of being ordered from said server and a plurality of items of display information each indicative of a display object that shows one of the limited plurality of products, each of the items of specifying information and display information being described in a link-enabling format, each of the items of specifying information and/or a visual presentation of the display object being linked

with an address of a screen for ordering a corresponding product from said server;

a second step of causing items of the specifying information and/or the display objects to be displayed on a display device, on the basis of the predetermined file read out by said first step;

a third step of allowing a selection of the items of specifying information and/or the display objects displayed on said display device; and

a fourth step of requesting said server to supply a screen of the address linked with the item of specifying information and/or the display object selected by said third step, obtaining the screen, and then causing said display device to display, on the basis of the screen, a screen for ordering a product corresponding to the selected item of specifying information and/or the display object from said server,

wherein after said fourth step, a procedure for ordering the product is carried out by accessing said server via the network.

33. An apparatus for a user to access a server on a network to order a product from the server, said apparatus comprising:

a storage medium storing therein a predetermined file including a plurality of items of specifying information each specifying one of a limited plurality of products that are among all products capable of being ordered from said

server and a plurality of items of display information each indicative of a display object that shows one of the limited plurality of products, each of the items of specifying information and display information being described in a link-enabling format, each of the items of specifying information and/or a visual presentation of the display object being linked with an address of a screen for ordering a corresponding product from said server;

a display device;

an operator unit; and

a processor device coupled with said storage medium, said display device and said operator unit, said processor device being adapted to:

read out the predetermined file from said storage medium;

cause items of the specifying information and/or the display objects to be displayed on said display device, on the basis of the read-out predetermined file;

allow a selection of the items of specifying information and/or the display objects displayed on said display device, in response to an operation of said operator unit;

request said server to supply a screen of the address linked with the selected item of specifying information and/or display object, obtain the screen, and then cause said display device to display, on the basis of the obtained screen, a screen for ordering a product corresponding to the selected item of specifying

information and/or display object from said server; and

carry out, after the screen for ordering the product is displayed on said display device, a procedure for ordering the product by accessing said server via the network.

34. A computer-readable storage medium storing therein a file for use in a product/order method in which a user proceeds from a product-specifying screen to a procedure for ordering the product when the user desires to order the product by accessing a server on a network,

wherein a plurality of items of specifying information each specifying one of a plurality of products and a plurality of items of display information each indicative of a related display object are each described in said file in a link-enabling format,

the related display objects have at least first and second display modes,

each of the items of specifying information is allocated at least one of the related display objects which has one of said first and second display modes,

each of the items of specifying information allocated the related display object having said first display mode specifies one of a limited plurality of products that are among all products capable of being ordered by accessing said server,

a visual presentation of the related display object having said first display mode is linked with an address

of the product-specifying screen that shows the product specified by the item of specifying information corresponding to the related display object,

a visual presentation of the related display object having said second display mode is linked with a particular directory in said storage medium, and

the product specified by the specifying information allocated the related display object having said second display mode is recorded under the particular directory.

ADD
R17